



DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

News Release

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DLNR TO CONTINUE TEST OF PADDLEBOARD CORRIDOR IN WATERS OFF ALA MOANA BEACH PARK

Trend seen in fewer user conflicts

HONOLULU -- The Department of Land and Natural Resources is extending the test period for the Stand-up Paddleboard (SUP) corridor in the waters off Ala Moana Beach Park for another six months before making a determination whether the buoy system demarking a voluntary paddling zone closest to the reef should remain or be removed.

Since the buoys were installed in mid-May this year, DLNR's Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation, the managing agency for the Ala Moana lagoon area, has received a mix of comments from users on the division of these waters between swimmers and paddlers. Certain users still insist that stand-up paddleboards should be banned from the area. Others insist the paddle zone is perfectly suited for this waterway and serves its intended purpose.

"In every popular recreational waterway there will be occasional overcrowding and close calls. However, these types of incidents between swimmers and paddlers at Ala Moana seem to be on a downward trend.

It appears that the installation of the SUP corridor may have accomplished the department's goal of separating the two user groups without creating a set of rules that it could not enforce on a regular basis," said Ed Underwood, DOBOR administrator.

Although complaints and incidents have greatly diminished, the department expects the user conflicts to further decline in the next six months. A full year of testing will allow the department to see if there are fluctuations in the user conflicts between the seasons.

The department to date has not received any suggested changes to the current plan that it would consider practical and fair for all users. The set of guidelines DOBOR first proposed for the use of the SUP corridor has not been modified and will serve for the balance of the test period as the department's model for use of this waterway.

"At one time we considered installing signage to explain the purpose of the paddling zone. But, because the department conducted outreach at the start of this project and users also seemed to intuitively understand the concept for use of the corridor we have decided not to pursue installation of signage.

Users of this waterway are serving as models of conduct to new users and the system seems to be working well," said Meghan Statts, DOBOR O'ahu district manager.

"The department would like to thank the ocean users who have shown respect for the rights of others to share in this resource. The department is also grateful for the cooperation of paddle groups that helped to disseminate the proposed guidelines for use of the SUP corridor amongst paddlers," Statts said.

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Background information:

DLNR conducted a community meeting to discuss user conflicts in the waters of Ala Moana Beach Park in May 2009. At the time, DLNR proposed installation of a SUP corridor, demarked by a system of buoys as an alternative to instituting rules banning specific uses from this waterway. The department tested numerous configurations and different materials for the buoy system before settling on a design and fabricating the necessary hardware. The buoy system was installed in May 2010, and the department disseminated its proposed guidelines for use of the SUP Corridor. Installation of the buoys system marked the beginning of a six-month test period during which the department monitored comments made in the media and comments received from users. November 2010 marked the end of the six-month test period.

NOTE: The department would like to remind ocean users that the buoys are not designed as floatation devices or moorings and they should not be used for these purposes. The department would also like to note that in spite of kayaks being manually powered watercraft like Stand-Up Paddleboards, they are not allowed in the lagoon area inside the reef at Ala Moana Beach Park. The Department's rules, however, do allow for surfboards and Hawaiian racing canoes in the canoe practice zone within the lagoon.

DOBOR RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES FOR USE OF THE ALA MOANA OCEAN WATERS STAND-UP PADDLING CORRIDOR

The Stand-Up Paddling corridor is demarked by a series of buoys and the interior (*mauka*) edge of the reef. This area is designated for use by stand up paddlers.

The swimming/wading zone is the area between the series of buoys and the shoreline. This area is designated for use by swimmers and waders.

Swimmers and waders should always have the right of way in all areas.

Novice paddlers should wear a leash attached to their boards while in the waterway.

Minors and individuals unsure of their swimming abilities operating paddleboards in the paddling corridor should wear a US Coast Guard approved personal floatation device (PFD) as a precaution. DLNR recommends that everyone, regardless of age or swimming ability, wear a PFD while operating a paddleboard.

Paddlers may ingress and egress the waters of the waterway at any point but should take the safest, most direct route to the paddling corridor.

Swimmers may enter and swim along the paddling corridor but should be aware of paddlers at all times.

Swimmers may access the reef by traversing the paddling corridor at any point but should take the safest, most direct route to the reef.

The department hopes that all users of this waterway will respect the rights of others to enjoy this resource. The department also hopes that swimmers, waders and paddlers will act responsibly, render aid to those who need assistance and mentor with aloha others who are not acquainted with the uses swim/wading zone or the paddling corridor.